

MEETING SPECIAL NEEDS

Housing for Farmworkers	3-49
Housing for Homeless People	3-52
Housing for People With Disabilities	3-55
Housing for Seniors	3-58
Shared Housing and Co-Housing	3-60
SRO Hotels and Efficiency Apartments	3-63
Supportive Housing	3-66

Housing for Farmworkers

Although many people think of the Bay Area as an urban region, agriculture plays a major role in many Bay Area counties. Farmworkers are an essential component of this agricultural sector of the economy. Unfortunately, the farmworker housing issue is often pushed out of sight and, therefore, out of the public eye.

Farmworkers tend to be relatively young, predominantly male, and almost always members of a minority group, primarily Hispanic. The vast majority of farmworkers are legally eligible to work in California, although a small minority are undocumented workers. Whether they are documented or not, they are still covered by fair housing laws. While a number of farmworkers are single men, many have family members accompanying them, especially after the recent changes in immigration laws. Most farmworkers have high rates of poverty, live in overcrowded housing units, and have a low homeownership rate. Some farmworkers migrate, depending on the types of agricultural products, while others are relatively permanent within a community.

California has a Farmworker Housing Grant Program, administered by HCD. Other funds for farmworker housing may be available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Housing Program, Rural Community Assistance Corporation, and CDBG Grant Program. HCD also includes an Office of Migrant Services, which deals with seasonal rental housing and support services.

Benefits

- Reduces overcrowding and the accompanying deterioration of the community's housing stock.
- Helps assimilate immigrants into the society by bringing them into the community.
- Provides opportunities for adequate housing, as a matter of fairness, equal to those of other types of employees.
- Improves the efficiency of the agricultural sector of the Bay Area economy.
- Reduces long-distance commutes, improving air quality.

During the Housing Element Process...

- **Define the Issue.** It is critical to define the exact characteristics of the farmworker populations being served so that appropriate housing types are available. Housing opportunities should accommodate the need for temporary housing by migrant workers and permanent housing by year-around residents.
- **Ensure Adequate Sites.** If sufficient sites for farmworker housing are not shown in the housing element, farmworker housing must be allowed "by right" in districts where it can be accommodated.
- **Involve Major Stakeholders.** Farmworker organizations as well as growers should be involved in the formulation of farmworker housing programs.
- **Expand Area of Analysis.** Multiple-jurisdictional farmworker housing programs may be especially useful in collecting data and devising solutions.


Potential Programs and Actions

- **Integrate Family Housing into the Community.** Farmworker housing for families should be provided within existing communities so that the families can participate in community life and take advantage of available commercial, educational, and public services.
- **Site Housing for Single Men in Appropriate Locations.** Farmworker housing for single men could be located within an existing community or nearer the workplace. Locating such housing nearer the workplace reduces travel times and may reduce public opposition.
- **Revise the Zoning Ordinance.** To facilitate farmworker housing, allow such developments as a permitted use in appropriate zones, or "by right" if the special needs analysis has demonstrated inadequate sites.

- **Examine Housing Types.** Housing types common in California—single-family homes for a nuclear family—may not be appropriate for farmworkers with extended families.
- **Educate the Public.** Local governments can undertake public education on the value of agriculture and the contribution of agricultural workers to the Bay Area's diversity and economy.
- **Consider Multi-lingual Programs.** Public participation and information programs may need to include presentations and materials in Spanish or other languages used by local farmworkers.

Contacts and Resources

See Appendix D for phone numbers and addresses, where relevant.

 HCD, *Migrant Farmworker Housing in California*, State of California, 1988.

 California Department of Housing & Community Development

 US Department of Agriculture

 Rural Community Assistance Program

See Also...

- Supportive Housing (*Page 3-66*)

Success Stories

- **Townhomes Complex for Farmworkers.** Harvest Grove in the City of Healdsburg consists of 44 townhomes clustered around a central courtyard for farmworkers and their families. The development has a large community meeting room and a community garden with a custom garden gate commemorating the life of Cesar Chavez. Harvest Grove was built by **Burbank Housing Development Corporation** using USDA 514/516 financing along with some funding from the Healdsburg Redevelopment Agency and an Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) grant for site acquisition.
- **Rural Center combines Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing for Farmworker Families.** The John H. Boccardo Living Center in southern Santa Clara County provides 18 transitional and eight shelter units located around a common courtyard to meet the needs of rural and farmworker families needing housing as well as to meet winter general emergency shelter needs. On-site play areas and community rooms meet the social and recreational needs of large families, while a building wing containing educational, computer learning, food preparation, administrative, counseling, and training rooms accommodate the full range of supportive services which are shared between the transitional housing and shelter. All residents are provided the training and support services necessary to help them ultimately secure permanent housing solutions regardless of whether they have entered the facility with an emergency shelter need or through referral by a network of other service organizations.

Developed by **South County Housing** and owned and operated by Emergency Housing Consortium (EHC), the success of the Center is due to a unique financial collaboration involving the cities of **Morgan Hill** and **Gilroy** and the **County of Santa Clara** in a first-ever partnership involving both HUD and USDA shelter programs. In addition to EHC's on-site programs, residents receive a variety of support services from other Santa Clara County organizations, which work together with EHC and South County Housing through the Santa Clara County Collaborative on Homelessness and Housing Issues.



Harvest Grove, Healdsburg



Boccardo Living Center,
Santa Clara County

Tom Jones

Burbank Housing

Housing for Homeless People

Homeless people face the ultimate housing deprivation. The homeless population in California is estimated at approximately 1 percent of the State's total population. About a third of the homeless consist of homeless families. Homeless people's circumstances vary considerably—some are employed but many have been unemployed for some time.

Homeless people need permanent supportive housing, emergency shelter, or transitional housing. To the extent this housing or shelter is being provided, it is provided by a combination of local governments, religious organizations, and not-for-profit organizations. The need is not limited to our larger cities but extends to smaller communities.

Siting facilities that serve homeless people can be challenging. Community education is essential to building community acceptance, helping local residents to question their stereotypes about homeless people and understand the real issues of homelessness in their community. Also, State law is very clear about the need for local communities to provide adequate sites for emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities that serve homeless individuals and families.

Benefits

- Helps people who have had hard times to get back on their feet.
- Helps reduce crime rates in heavily impacted areas.
- Provides the framework and stability for homeless people with physical and mental illness problems and substance abuse issues to deal with them.
- Increases the awareness of community members about the need to look after others who are having difficulty in life.
- Improves the quality of life for everyone in the community.
- Treats everyone in the community humanely.

During the Housing Element Process...

- **Acknowledge the Problem.** Often, the first step is to develop community awareness and to understand and acknowledge that homelessness is an issue in the community.
- **Form a Task Force.** A task force approach is often useful because the issues are usually complex and multi-disciplinary.
- **Review Regulations.** Local land-use regulations should be reviewed to ensure that they allow emergency shelters, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing without unnecessary planning and zoning approvals. Consider zoning some sites where emergency shelters are permitted "by right."
- **Bring in Experts.** Involve non-profit and religious organizations that specialize in homeless issues to draw upon their experience and knowledge.
- **Involve the Community.** Appropriate neighborhood involvement can help establish successful homeless housing programs.
- **Involve Necessary Governmental Entities.** Housing for homeless people often involves multiple departments and agencies because the issues that homeless people face are often quite complex.


Potential Programs and Actions


- **Conduct Public Education Program.** Community education is very important to build support for programs for homeless people.
- **Form Partnerships.** Partnerships between the local government and other organizations are often useful in providing housing for homeless people.
- **Revise the Zoning Ordinance.** To facilitate the development of needed facilities, revise the zoning ordinance to expressly allow for emergency shelters in particular zones. Some communities have designated some sites where emergency shelters are permitted by right..
- **Use the Power of Religious Organizations.** Religious organizations that provide shelter for homeless people as part of their mission may be constitutionally able to bypass the need for some or all of the zoning approvals.


Contacts and Resources

See Appendix D for phone numbers and addresses, where relevant.

 California Affordable Housing Law Project, *Laws Affecting the Location & Approval of Affordable Housing and Homeless People*, Oakland, 1999.

 Community Acceptance Strategies Consortium, *Siting of Homeless Housing and Services*, Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California, San Francisco, 1999.

 HCD, *Shelter for the Homeless: Housing Element Requirements*, 1989.

 Interagency Council on the Homeless, *Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve*, The Urban Institute, HUD, 1999.

 HUD - San Francisco Office

 National Center for Homelessness and Poverty

See Also...

- Supportive Housing (*Page 3-66*)

Success Stories

- **Use of Municipal Swim Facilities as Cold Weather Homeless Shelter.** When threatened with closure of the National Guard Armories for use as cold weather homeless shelters, **Petaluma** sought an alternative. A municipal swim facility, located two blocks away from the Opportunity Center, a day center for homeless adults, had not been used for winter swimming in many years and provided an appropriate space. The facility has two large dressing rooms complete with heaters, showers, and ADA-compliant restrooms. It sleeps about fifty people nightly, providing a temporary shelter facility until the City completes a multi-service facility for homeless people in 2002. Petaluma has also joined **Santa Rosa** and **Sonoma County** to implement a “Continuum of Care” to better serve homeless people in the County. This process has enabled government agencies, the non-profit community and members of the private sector to join in providing better services, shelters, information, and referrals.
- **New Family Center fits into Neighborhood and Boosts Resident Successes.** Hamilton Family Center, formerly housed in a crowded Haight Ashbury church basement, now has a new home for its transitional housing and programs for homeless families in **San Francisco**. Although initially opposed by some of its North of Panhandle neighbors, a lengthy neighborhood participation process and sponsor assurances gained the project support and a building design that fits both the facility and the character of the area. The facility is composed of two separate four-story structures sharing a common open space. Able to accommodate up to 70 persons and fully meeting the City’s parking requirement, the facility includes residential common areas for all residents including a living room, separate dining room, meals program kitchen, and daycare center with its own large outdoor play area. Support spaces include several large and small meeting spaces for simultaneous adult and children’s educational and counseling programs, skills enhancement, youth recreation, and supportive services for the residents to help homeless families gain the ability to live independently after a 12 to 24 month residency. While **HUD** and the City and County of San Francisco have provided substantial funding for this facility, the sponsors raised several million dollars in private and foundation giving that helped make this facility and its operations endowment possible.



Hamilton Family Center, San Francisco

Steve Suzuki

Housing for People with Disabilities

The term “disability” refers to a wide range of physical and mental conditions that may affect a person’s ability to function independently. The over-riding consideration in housing for people with disabilities is to ensure that the person is able to function independently to the extent of his or her ability and desire. The lack of suitable housing choices should not further limit the person’s ability to function on his or her own.

People with disabilities represent a wide range of housing needs. For many people with disabilities, the availability of barrier-free design housing or accessibility modifications to their existing housing can enable them to live independently, either alone or with their families. For some, the availability of supportive housing or shared living arrangements provides an environment that is suitable for meeting both their housing needs and ongoing service or support needs. For others, more intensive care arrangements may be necessary.

The housing needs of people with disabilities vary widely depending on the type and severity of disability as well as the age, ability and personal preference of each individual. Just as for non-disabled individuals, what is important is that all types of housing be available to meet the wide and changing range of individual needs.

Supportive housing is a growing form of housing for people with disabilities, providing medical and other services on-site in developments that vary in size from only a few residents to much larger facilities. State law provides that small developments must be subject to the same local land-use regulations as single-family housing (see Supportive Housing). Supportive housing developments for people with disabilities can be assisted by using HUD’s Section 811 grant program, which provides direct loan financing. Capital advances can be used for new construction or rehabilitation of existing buildings. The Section 811 program also includes rental assistance for residents.

Local governments and providers of housing for people with disabilities also must be aware of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. §12210) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. §1691), both of which prohibit discrimination by local governments against people with disabilities and require reasonable accommodation.

It is also important to remember that *all* new multi-family housing is required to have barrier-free features. In an elevator building, 100 percent of the unit must be barrier-free. In a non-elevator building, only the ground floor apartments must be barrier-free. Several excellent design books are now on the market to help explain barrier-free design and provide design solutions, and others are available from the National Association of Homebuilders and from HUD. For now, accessibility features represent less than 1/2 to 1 percent of the cost of most projects. As accessibility becomes more common, the cost will become even more inconsequential.

Benefits

- Enhances the existing housing stock, providing a wider range of housing types and related services that can respond to the special housing needs of many community residents.
- Provides housing choices that enable all residents to find accommodation that is suitable for their level of ability.
- Encourages a more integrated and comprehensive approach to housing for people with special needs, allowing them to participate fully in civic and community activities.

During the Housing Element Process...

- **Involve People with Disabilities, Service Providers, and Advocacy Groups.** People with disabilities are the best and most reliable source of information about their housing and fair housing needs. There are also a number of service providers and advocacy groups throughout the Bay Area that can provide valuable information and input to ensure that local policies and programs respond to community needs in an effective and equitable manner.

- **Evaluate Needs.** The special housing needs of people with disabilities must be evaluated and described in the housing element. The evaluation should consider the full range of disabilities, existing housing opportunities, and areas of current and projected unmet need.
- **Review Regulations.** Review local land-use and building regulations to ensure that they do not act as barriers to the development of appropriate housing opportunities.
- **Review Parking Requirements.** Housing for people with disabilities will generally require less parking than comparable housing developments. These lower requirements should be reflected in local standards.

Potential Programs and Actions

- **Ensure Adequate and Suitable Sites.** Local land-use plans and development regulations should ensure adequate sites to meet the full range of housing needs for people with disabilities. Supportive housing and other group living situations should be located close to transit, shops, and community services.
- **Promote Barrier-Free Design.** Encourage developers to use barrier-free design in new housing developments so that all housing can be used by people of all abilities. For example, encourage builders to grade up to the front door instead of building stairs.
- **Consider Density Bonuses.** Local governments should consider providing density bonuses to developments that use barrier-free design or otherwise respond to the special housing needs of people with disabilities.
- **Identify Financial Support Opportunities.** Identify local, state, federal, and private sources of financial support to assist in the development of housing for people with disabilities.
- **Form Partnerships.** Investigate possibilities to form partnerships with non-profit housing groups.
- **Establish Local Loan and Grant Programs.** Develop loan and grant programs to make it easier for people with disabilities to afford accessibility modifications to their existing homes, build new barrier-free design housing or otherwise pay for their special housing needs. CDBG and HOME funds can be used to fund grant programs of this type.
- **Provide Information and Education Programs.** Work with advocacy groups and others to develop and implement information and education programs for local housing staff, planning officials, developers, community groups and others to build support for a more comprehensive and effective approach to housing for people of all abilities.

Contacts and Resources

See Appendix D for phone numbers and addresses, where relevant.

 Brummett, William J., *The Essence of Home: Design Solutions for Assisted Living Housing*, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1996.

 California Association of Homes and Services for the Aging

 Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California

 Job Accommodation Network

 Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc.

 Center for Universal Design

See Also...

- Supportive Housing (*Page 3-66*)

Success Stories

- **Barrier-Free Design in a Resident-Initiated Affordable Development.** Silver Oaks is a 24 unit project in Oakley with 23 units for very low-income people with disabilities, a manager's unit, a community room and a common outdoor area. The apartments are designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities, including mobility impairments. The units have wider than usual doorways to accommodate wheelchairs, stove and oven controls within easy reach, adaptable countertops and showers into which wheelchairs can be rolled. The project was initiated by an Oakley resident who approached a non-profit housing developer, **Ecumenical Association for Housing (EAH)**, to build the project. EAH secured funds from the County Redevelopment Agency and federal sources. Grants from two local foundations covered costs related to ensuring accessibility and indoor and outdoor furniture for the common areas.
- **Supportive Housing for Deaf Seniors.** Fremont is home to the California School for the Deaf and has a sizable deaf community, including many deaf seniors for whom the aging process can be particularly daunting. The Deaf Senior Retirement Corporation, a member of the Bay Area Coalition of Deaf Senior Citizens, hired **Satellite Senior Homes** to develop an affordable housing development with supportive services for deaf seniors. Van Meter Williams Pollack teamed with Martinez and Amador to design the Fremont Oak Gardens, a 51 unit apartment complex with planned amenities and systems to meet the specific needs of the deaf including a strobe light (signal) system, a fire safety system, a door bell system, TTY (telephone) system, video entrance technology, and a computer lab. Also, a variety of support services will be offered at Fremont Oak Gardens, such as interpreting, health screening, home delivered meals, and transportation. The development is located on lands previously owned by St. Anne's Episcopal Church, which will remain on site. The City's Redevelopment Agency Housing Fund and HOME funds paid for land acquisition, while CDBG funds provided pre-development financing. Additional sources of funding include Alameda County HOME funds, and a HUD 202 application has been submitted. Five neighboring jurisdictions may also provide funding and a campaign to fundraise private sector contributions has begun.

Housing for Seniors

With the overall aging of society, the senior population (persons over 65 years of age) will increase in most communities. Consequently, the need for affordable and specialized housing for older residents will grow. Typical housing types used to meet the needs of seniors include smaller attached or detached housing for independent living (both market-rate and affordable), second units, shared housing, age-restricted below-market-rate rental developments, congregate care facilities, lifecare facilities, residential care homes licensed by the State, and skilled nursing homes.

Congregate housing is long-term supportive housing in a group setting, which includes independent living sleeping accommodations in conjunction with shared dining and recreational facilities. Residents of congregate care facilities occupy individual apartments, most of which include kitchens, although these may be minimal. The facility has a centralized dining room and kitchen where at least one hot meal per day is provided. Other services may include maid service, security and emergency services, recreation rooms, nursing assistance, and beauty salons.

A variation of congregate housing is called “life care.” Elderly persons buy into a life care development with an initial non-refundable accommodation fee plus a monthly fee. The price guarantees occupancy in a particular size of apartment and typically one meal a day. Tenants may also move into a “personal care” unit (no kitchen, three hot meals provided) or nursing facility if health support needs change. One version of life care allows purchase of a condominium unit so that the member owns a real asset.

Many supportive housing developments for the elderly have been built using HUD’s Section 202 and 202/8 programs, which provide direct loan financing. Non-profit organizations have been instrumental in marshalling the resources to construct and operate the developments, but housing authorities and for-profit developers are also potential development project sponsors.

Benefits

- Allows residents to remain in a community as they age and to participate in local civic and community activities.
- Meets the needs of older persons through developments oriented toward the senior population.
- Increases the supply of housing for larger families by making it possible for older households in large homes to move into smaller units, group living arrangements, or care facilities.
- Enjoys fairly widespread support, allowing senior housing developments to be approved more easily in the public review process than most other multi-family developments.

During the Housing Element Process...

- **Evaluate Needs.** The needs of the elderly should be evaluated and described in the housing element.
- **Review Regulations.** Land use regulations may need to be reviewed to ensure that they allow opportunities for each type of living facility.

Potential Programs and Actions

- **Consider an Overlay Zone.** Facilitate senior housing by designating a “senior housing overlay zone” that allows for higher densities and reduced parking requirements than the base residential land use designations.
- **Identify Financial Support Opportunities.** Identify local, state, federal and private sources of financial support to assist in the development of housing for seniors.
- **Form Partnerships.** Investigate possibilities to form partnerships between local government and non-profit housing groups.

- **Establish Local Loan Programs.** Develop loan programs to make borrowing easier for seniors.
- **Provide Density Bonuses.** Use density bonuses to encourage senior housing.
- **Select Convenient Locations.** Encourage senior housing to locate close to transit, shops, and community services.
- **Educate the Community.** Educate the community on seniors' housing needs and build support for senior housing.
- **Use the Internet.** Encourage project proponents, non-profit housing groups and seniors looking for housing options to take advantage of the large quantity of information on the Internet.

Contacts and Resources

See Appendix D for phone numbers and addresses, where relevant.

✍ Gordon, Paul A., *Seniors' Housing and Care Facilities* (3d ed), Urban Land Institute, Washington, DC, 1998.

✍ Parker, Valerie, et al, *A Change for the Better: How to Make Communities More Responsive to Older Residents*, AARP, Washington, DC, 1991.

✍ Porter, Douglas R., *Housing for Seniors*, Urban Land Institute, Washington, DC, 1995.

☎ American Association of Retired Persons

☎ California Association of Homes and Services for the Aging

☎ Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California

See Also...

- Second Units (*Page 3-23*)
- Shared Housing and Co-Housing (*Page 3-60*)
- Supportive Housing (*Page 3-66*)

Success Stories

- **Land Financing Deepens Affordability for Senior Apartments.** The Saratoga Senior Development in the City of Vacaville has 108 units, of which 10 percent were targeted for senior households with incomes below 50 percent of median and the remaining were for senior households with incomes below 60 percent of median. The City made a 30-year, 0-percent deferred loan of \$800,000 to the developer to purchase land that was designated multi-family, high density. In exchange, it required the developer to make 20 units affordable to households with incomes below 30 percent of median. The development is currently being expanded, and the City is once again providing land financing of \$566,000 on favorable terms in exchange for 20 of the planned 120 units to be targeted to households with incomes below 40 percent of median. The City of Vacaville has a compliance program in place that monitors affordability and re-certifies all affordable units.
- **Senior Apartments in the Old Town.** BRIDGE worked with the Pinole Redevelopment Agency to provide 70 units of housing for low-income seniors on this three acre site close to Pinole's Old Town and Senior Center. BRIDGE owns the site, which is ringed by mature eucalyptus trees and commands sweeping views of the San Francisco Bay. The development has one and two-bedroom units with a community room, landscaped courtyard, library, and hair salon. The project has won awards for design excellence and was funded through state tax credits purchased by Edison Capital in addition to city and county subsidies to ensure long-term affordability.

Shared Housing and Co-Housing

Shared housing as used here is a generic term. It generally means an arrangement in which two or more un-related people, each with private sleeping quarters, share a house or an apartment. It has various names such as intentional communities, homesharing, co-housing, and group living. It occurs when people reside together for social contact, mutual support and assistance in pursuit of a common purpose, and/or to reduce housing expenses. The group may range from two elderly persons sharing a small home to several disabled adults sharing a large single family home or a single mother with an extra bedroom may share her home with an elderly person who helps with childcare and/or living expenses. The degree of assistance can vary from none (other than from other members of the household) to live-in, full-time help.

Co-housing is a type of shared housing arrangement. Co-housing developments have individual units with kitchens, combined with a common kitchen and meeting room. They may also include such common features as childcare facilities, artist studios, darkrooms, and woodworking shops. Co-housing developments are normally organized as condominiums, although they can also be organized as cooperatives.

Shared housing arrangements are normally established by mutual agreement of the residents. Housing arrangements that include support services organized or provided by an outside agency are usually classified as supportive housing.

Shared housing arrangements are allowed by zoning in a variety of ways. Several un-related adults who share a housing unit fall within the definition of “family.” (This is a state constitutional right, not dependent upon the wording of the zoning ordinance.) Some shared housing arrangements may be established as an apartment or condominium.

Benefits

- Reduces the cost of household maintenance for each member of the group, provides social contact, generates mutual support, increases personal safety and security, decreases the amount of assistance needed from relatives, and integrates special groups (such as the elderly) into the community.
- Encourages car sharing which is where several households share a single vehicle. This can reduce the need for parking and further reduces household expenses.
- Allows for more efficient use of government housing subsidies or funds from a sponsoring organization.

During the Housing Element Process...

- **Review Ordinances and Development Regulations.** Review the zoning ordinance and other development regulations to identify policies and standards that act as barriers to shared housing arrangements.
- **Seek Input and Advice.** The involvement of non-profit groups active in homesharing can help overcome the concerns of elected officials and community residents. They can help to identify potential barriers, define workable strategies, and develop a framework for new policies and programs to support shared living initiatives.

Potential Programs and Actions

- **Revise Building Codes.** Building codes may need to be revised if they require more living space per resident than is available in many homes suitable for conversion to shared housing.
- **Promote Public Education.** Public education that addresses the misconceptions or a lack of knowledge about shared housing is a strong element for success.
- **Promote Good Design.** Good design ensures opportunities for privacy to smooth the resident’s transition from single-family homes. Some remodeling of the unit may be necessary to provide both private and shared space.

- **Provide Additional Services.** Many cities and counties offer counseling services for homesharing by six or fewer persons. A local government interested in sponsoring a new program might contact existing homesharing organizations for advice.

Contacts and Resources

See Appendix D for phone numbers and addresses, where relevant.

- ✍️ McCamant, Kathryn and Charles Durrett, *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves* (2d ed), Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, 1993.

See Also...

- Housing for Seniors (*Page 3-58*)
- Supportive Housing (*Page 3-66*)

Success Stories

- **An Innovative Inter-Generational Cooperative Housing Program.** The **Fairfax Vest Pocket Community** provides shared rental housing and nurtures community and companionship for potentially isolated lower income seniors and single parents with children. The complex—within walking distance of shopping, schools, day care and two senior community centers—consists of five shared houses and a community building with meeting rooms, a laundry and a community kitchen. The houses, set in a neighborhood of single family craftsman style homes, contain large common living and dining areas and three to four sleeping quarters with one bedroom and bath being ground floor accessible. The kitchen looks onto an outdoor play space and has been designed to facilitate shared living.

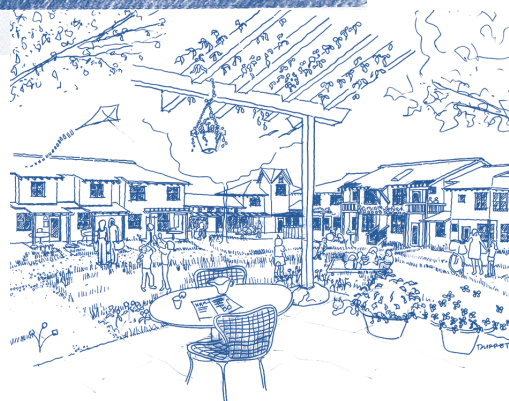
Marin Housing Authority screens potential residents for financial and program eligibility and they are then interviewed by current residents for housemate compatibility. **Marin Housing Authority** has also started an on-site supportive services program to assist residents with employment goals, problem solving, and life and community-living skills. The Vest Pocket Community was funded by a State model program, the Marin Community Foundation and county CDBG money. It has won several awards and demonstrates the benefit of using infill sites for creating affordable housing while also creating an alternative to the isolation faced by many seniors and single parent families in conventional housing.

- **Building Co-Housing in a Suburban Community.** A 32 unit co-housing development is being constructed on a 2.2 acre site that lies along a bike trail about a mile away from the **Pleasant Hill BART** station. Each unit, ranging from one bedroom to four bedroom homes, is a self-contained condominium linked via internal pedestrian paths to extensive common facilities, including community cooking, dining and sitting rooms, children's playrooms, guest rooms, and laundry facilities. All the buildings have passive solar heating and cooling features. Extensive involvement of both neighbors and future co-housing residents in the design and development process helped the developers negotiate a site plan with limited vehicular access and reduced parking (1.6 spaces per unit) in graveled parking areas. The City went through a General Plan Amendment and rezoned the site from general commercial to a planned unit development. It also required the development to include six senior households to meet inclusionary housing requirements. As with other co-housing projects, this development offers a model of creating higher density housing that reinvigorates older neighborhoods and strengthens social ties that make for strong communities.



Pleasant Hill Co-Housing

The CoHousing Company



SRO Hotels and Efficiency Apartments

Single room occupancy hotels (SROs) are one of the most traditional forms of affordable private housing for single and elderly low-income people and for new arrivals to an area. An SRO room usually is small, between 80 and 250 square feet. It typically has a sink and a closet but shares a bathroom, shower, and kitchen with other rooms. An efficiency apartment also is small but contains a small cooking area and bathroom.

Many older SROs have been lost due to deterioration, natural disasters, hotel conversions, and demolition. One component of the strategy is to preserve and rehabilitate existing residential hotels and other buildings suitable for SRO or efficiency apartments. A second component is to encourage new SRO and efficiency apartment construction.

Benefits

- Provides an affordable entry point into the housing market for formerly homeless people.
- Provides a low-cost housing option that can also protect some people from becoming homeless.
- Through rehabilitation, preserves housing that is affordable, centrally located, and reasonably secure.
- May provide affordability for low-income households without the need for government subsidy. With subsidies, these units become affordable to very low-income persons.
- Offers a social environment of independence and dignity.

During the Housing Element Process...

- **Evaluate Existing SROs.** Identify existing SRO facilities and evaluate whether they may be lost due to conversion or be in need of rehabilitation. Work with owners to identify the population of people being served in existing facilities, define issues that need to be addressed, and evaluate potential preservation options.
- **Consider Un-Met Demand and Under-Served Need.** Talk with service providers in the local area to identify un-met housing needs for low and very low income individuals and families as well as special needs groups. Consider whether new SROs or efficiency apartments might help meet those needs. Vacancy rates and waiting lists for existing facilities are good indicators of pent-up demand.
- **Identify Preservation Opportunities and Potential Sites for New Facilities.** Based on evaluation results, identify existing facilities that should be targeted for preservation efforts as well as sites and areas where new facilities could be developed.
- **Evaluate Existing Policies and Regulations.** Make sure that the General Plan, zoning ordinance and other development regulations provide adequate support for preservation of existing SROs and efficiency apartment as well as development of new facilities. Identify potential barriers, such as unreasonable parking requirements or excessive building standards.
- **Involve the Community and Stakeholder Groups.** Community support is essential for a successful SRO program. Encourage collaborative public-private sector approaches and programs that address both administrative and technical aspects. Involve local officials, community residents, and members of key stakeholder groups (e.g., service delivery agencies, SRO owners, SRO residents, etc.) in defining a program that meets housing needs and responds to community concerns. Utilize Success Stories from other communities to help alleviate unfounded fears about the impacts of SROs and efficiency units.

Potential Programs and Actions

- **Adopt Policies on Preservation.** A policy in the housing element calling for the adoption of an SRO preservation ordinance is a first step to slow the removal of units. Further, communities can arrange below-market-rate loans, allocate CDBG funds, or use tax increment financing to rehabilitate units.

- **Reduce Development Pressure.** Zoning and building codes can be amended to discourage new construction in areas where existing SROs are located, thus limiting the pressures for demolishing the older structures in favor of new and larger (and expensive) hotels.
- **Provide Assistance as Needed.** Consider both public and private funding sources to assist private owners in preserving SRO facilities. Address rehabilitation costs, social service delivery, and maintenance of the units at affordable prices.
- **Identify the Lead Organization.** An organization must be identified or created with the financial strength and experience to evaluate, purchase, and rehabilitate an SRO or to enter into a joint venture with a for-profit developer.
- **Ensure Financial Feasibility.** For-profit developers and lenders must be willing to pursue SRO hotels as a profitable housing venture.
- **Undertake Educational Programs.** Neighborhood groups and local businesses must be educated about the advantages of new and rehabilitated SROs.
- **Ensure Good Management.** Professional management is required to keep the program going.

See Also...

- Infill Development (*Page 3-12*)
- Housing for Homeless People (*Page 3-52*)
- Supportive Housing (*Page 3-66*)

Success Stories

- **Former Nursing Home Provides Permanent Affordable Housing with Supportive Services.** The Hugh Taylor House is a former nursing home that now provides permanent affordable housing for the working poor and formerly homeless individuals. It includes 30 housing units, a mix of studios, and one and two bedroom units. Twenty-five units are reserved for Section 8 moderate Rehabilitation program recipients with all other units restricted to people with incomes below 50 percent of median. The development takes a comprehensive approach to solving more than the need for housing, **East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC)** has contracted with Career Training Institute to train tenants in career and vocational skills and job readiness. Computer orientation and tutorial sessions are offered. Tenants cultivate gardens in the sunny courtyards and share a community meeting room with other neighborhood organizations. The Bank of America, California Housing Rental Rehabilitation Program, and the City of Oakland funded the development.
- **Mini-Studio Apartments Help Bridge a Gap between SRO Hotels and Full-Size Apartments.** The Carroll Inn is designed to bridge the gap between SRO hotels and full-size apartments. It has 119 mini-studios, each of which is fully furnished and has an attached bathroom, microwave oven, refrigerator, and phone jack. Other amenities include community/meeting rooms, kitchens, laundries and vending machines on each floor, a mini-gym, and a small convenience store that stocks necessities at-cost for purchase by residents. Since security is an issue for many residents, Carroll Inn also has 24-hour front desk service, closed circuit video cameras, and security-locked entrances.

The development is located close to the Sunnyvale Town Center and is near public transportation, local retail employment centers, community support services and shopping. It provides affordable housing for people with very modest incomes, including individuals living and working in the community, seniors on fixed incomes and single parents with one child. **Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition** received pre-development funds from the American Red Cross; construction loans from Union Bank, the State Rental Housing Construction program, the City of **Sunnyvale** and Santa Clara County; a bridge loan from Mercy Housing; and permanent funds from SAMCO, the state, city, and county as well as the Intel Corporation as a low income tax credit investor. In addition to financial assistance, the City of Sunnyvale also acquired the site and adopted an ordinance allowing different standards for compact SRO units.



Carroll Inn, Sunnyvale

Tom Jones

Supportive Housing

Supportive housing is permanent rental housing linked to a range of support services designed to enable residents to maintain stable housing and lead fuller lives. It can service seniors, people with disabilities or long-term illnesses, farmworkers, and formerly homeless people. The types of support services that can be provided include medical and mental health care, vocational and employment services, substance abuse treatment, childcare, and independent living skills training.

Most supportive housing is built and managed by non-profit housing developers in partnership with non-profit service providers. Local governments, however, must play a major role in assuring support and providing necessary approvals. Some types of small-scale supportive housing arrangements may be totally excluded from special regulations. For example, a shared living arrangement that meets the definition of “residential facility” (H&S Code §1502(1)) and serves six or fewer persons cannot be required to apply for a conditional use permit, zoning variance, or other special zoning clearance if such approval is not required of a family dwelling of the same type in the same zone. (H&S Code §1566.3)

Benefits

- Provides housing that is particularly attractive to older persons because building design and services can be tailored to their special needs. The degree of health support services varies with the particular development.
- Offers a permanent solution to housing issues that, if not effectively addressed, can produce a financial and social burden for the community.
- Leverages substantial private sector and philanthropic resources to address community issues.
- Receives broad public acceptance and less neighborhood opposition because the need is so visible.

During the Housing Element Process...

- **Provide Sufficient Sites.** Begin by zoning larger areas for supportive housing development. Local zoning ordinances usually allow supportive housing developments in commercial zones and in selected residential zones, including single-family zones.
- **Review Zoning.** The zoning and other local regulations should encourage supportive housing by ensuring that the approval process is simple and the regulations are appropriate.
- **Review Parking Requirements.** The rate of car ownership of residents in supportive housing development is much lower than other types of housing developments. Therefore, less parking is required.
- **Involve Non-Profit Organizations.** Non-profit developers and service providers are the key to successful supportive housing initiatives. They should be involved in housing element discussions to ensure that policies and programs for supportive housing will be successful.




Potential Programs and Actions

- **Find a Sponsor.** Supportive housing developments often need formal sponsors such as community organizations, churches, city government, or the county welfare department. Each sponsor assumes an ongoing responsibility for the home including making initial arrangements, developing the project (if needed), selecting residents, hiring supervisory staff (if any), monitoring operations, and providing emergency assistance.
- **Provide Financial Support.** Financial subsidies or land use concessions can improve the affordability of supportive housing.
- **Ensure Good Management.** Management of the development is the paramount determinant of the quality of the environment for the residents. Good management also ensures that good relations are maintained with neighbors.

- **Provide Support to Individuals.** In market-rate developments, some organization may need to provide for the elderly occupant to buy an asset, such as a condominium unit.
- **Address Age Differences.** Individual developments need to address the problem of “age segregation” where the younger elderly do not want to move into a development dominated by the very elderly.

Contacts and Resources

See Appendix D for phone numbers and addresses, where relevant.

-  Corporation for Supportive Housing
-  California Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
-  Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California

See Also...

- Housing for Farmworkers (*Page 3-49*)
- Housing for Homeless People (*Page 3-52*)
- Housing for People with Disabilities (*Page 3-55*)
- Housing for Seniors (*Page 3-58*)

Success Stories

- **Supportive Housing to Help Seniors Live Independently and Age at Home.** A new health clinic and 40 units of affordable housing have been built by a non-profit housing developer, **Resources for Community Development (RCD)**, and a non-profit health service organization, Lifelong Medical Care (formerly Over 60 Health Center) to meet the needs of the frail elderly. All housing units and community space will be fully accessible and include amenities designed to meet the special needs of seniors. The building includes a multi-purpose community room, office spaces for case management and other service delivery and south-facing courtyard, and garden. The seniors living here will be able to maintain their independent status with minor assistance, age at home, and have a good quality of life. The project is funded by HUD's Section 202 program and by the City of **Berkeley's** Housing Trust Fund.
- **Neighbors Welcome Conversion of Run-Down Motel to Permanent Housing.** A dilapidated motel on San Pablo Avenue in **El Cerrito** was transformed into the Idaho Hotel apartments to provide 29 permanent supportive housing units for single homeless individuals. The sponsor, **Rubicon Programs Inc.** of Richmond, redesigned the former motel to include efficiency apartments with their own kitchenettes and baths, a community room, and kitchen as well as residential services and social programs. In addition to providing property management, Rubicon provides on-site services, including individual and group counseling, case management, vocational services, and other support to promote independent living. Eighteen of the units are for those with mental disabilities, while eleven units are set-aside for persons who are HIV positive. A staff of three provide the on-site property management and service programs for the residents with funding provided by a combination of local and federal sources. Rubicon also established a Neighborhood Advisory Group prior to completion of the project to build ties between the development and the surrounding community. Located close to grocery shopping, and within walking distance to the El Cerrito BART Station, residents can easily meet daily living needs and take public transportation to jobs, outside services, and other destinations.



Idaho Hotel Apartments

Tom Jones